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The Census Bureau

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Why We Need a Fact Finder

America always has used census numbers as the foundation for its representative government. The Constitution calls for a census every 10 years so that seats in the House of Representatives can be divided fairly--based on population--among the states. Local and state governments use census numbers to redraw other election districts. Census facts also are used by business people, neighborhood leaders, teachers, government planners at every level--everyone, including you, who needs to understand what is happening to our people and the economy.

What the Census Bureau Does

As the nation's Number One Fact Finder, the Bureau collects information by asking questions of households, businesses, and governments. It combines the answers into about 2,000 reports a year covering a wide variety of topics and geographic areas. Other federal government agencies also use the Census Bureau to conduct surveys for them.

Why a Census Bureau?

How Facts Are Collected

Using questionnaires, census workers gather information by personal visits, mail, or telephone. Questions can be part of a census (every household or business contacted) or a survey (a representative sample counted...which is considered a good estimate of all). Wide use of fill-in-the-blank, mailback questionnaires saves time and money.

The population and housing census occurs every 10 years, and the economic, agriculture, and governments censuses come every 5 years. The Bureau conducts about 250 surveys each year.

Examples of Information Collected

- About People: Age, race, sex, income, poverty, education, marital status, commuting habits, location, occupation, unemployment, ancestry and ethnic heritage....
- About Business and Industry: Number of employees, total payroll and receipts, products manufactured or sold....
- About Housing and Construction: Number of houses and apartments, owners and renters, property value or rent paid, housing starts, fuels used, mortgage costs....
- About Farms: Number, acreage, livestock, crop sales....
- About Governments: Revenues and expenditures, taxes, employment, pension funds....
- About Other Nations: Population, birth rates, death rates....
- About Foreign Trade: Exports and imports, origin and destination, units shipped....

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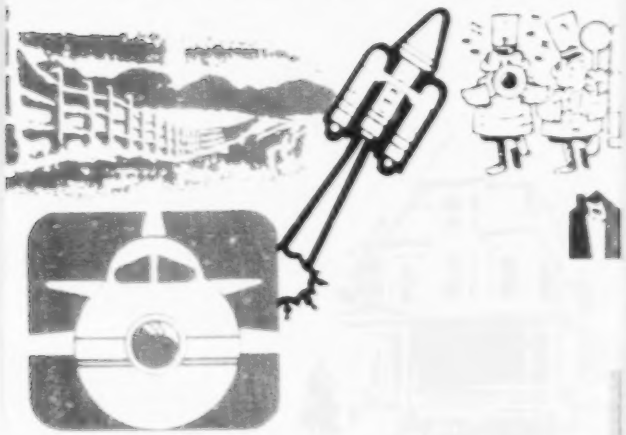


How Census Facts Are Published

Census numbers come in many shapes, sizes, and formats. Printed reports (with tables, charts, and maps), microfiche (to save you storage space), summary computer tapes, wall maps--all are designed to give you facts the way you want them. Many population, housing, agriculture, and economic reports are published state-by-state with facts about counties, cities, and metropolitan areas. Decennial census information comes in small sizes, too: city blocks, census tracts, neighborhoods. Other census publications combine facts from many sources into handy references: Statistical Abstract of the United States, State and Metropolitan Area Data Book, County and City Data Book.

TAKING OUR ECONOMIC PULSE

Many of the monthly "economic indicators" that measure how the nation is doing come directly or indirectly from the Census Bureau. Examples: employment and unemployment; housing starts; wholesale and retail trade; manufacturers' shipments, inventories, and orders; export and import trade; and sales of single-family homes.

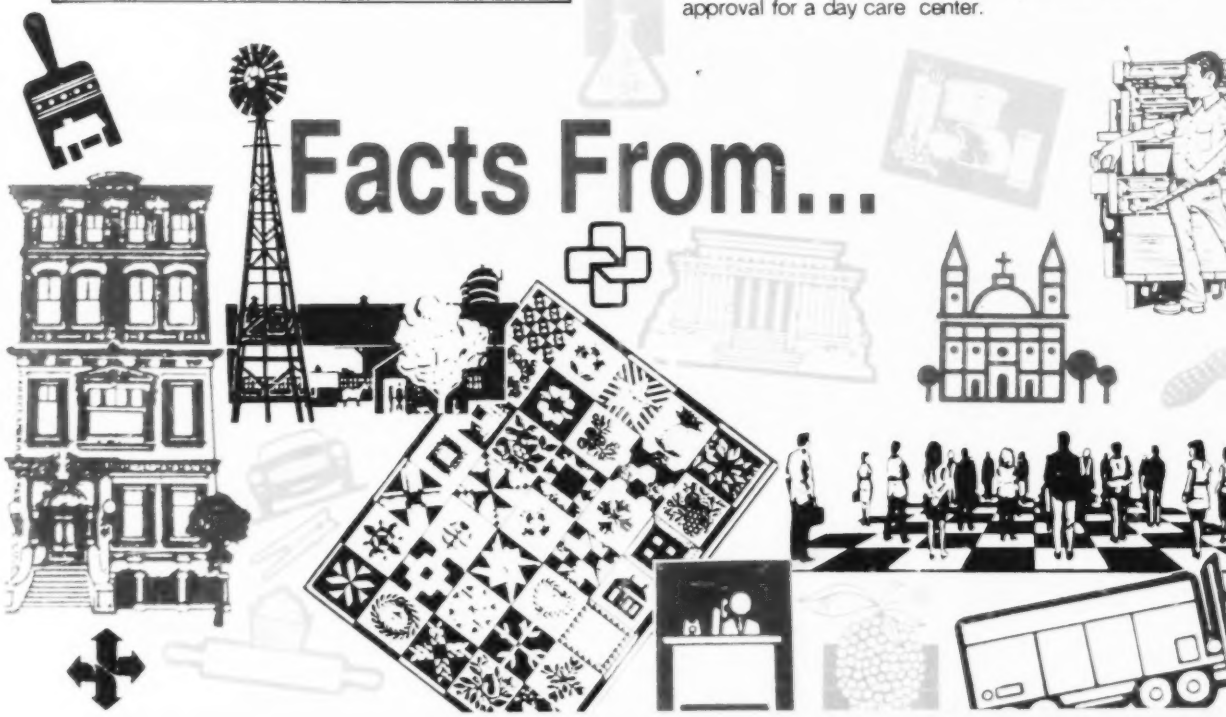
CENSUS FACTS ARE AVAILABLE ON:

Agriculture	Geography	People
Businesses	Governments	Retail Trade
Construction	Housing	Service Industries
Foreign Nations	Manufacturing	Transportation
Foreign Trade	Mineral Industries	Wholesale Trade

How You Can Use Census Information

Here are actual examples of how census facts can be used:

- During a heat wave, public health officials in St. Louis used census facts to locate neighborhoods with large numbers of elderly. City workers went door-to-door convincing many of the elderly to go to "cooling centers" and thus saved lives.
- A U.S. computer game company used Census Bureau international information to study the potential market among young men with TV sets in several Latin American countries.
- The high number of working mothers with small children in a low-income neighborhood--revealed by a study of census statistics--prompted community leaders in a midwest city to seek and win approval for a day care center.



STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

A strict federal law protects census information about individuals and businesses from disclosure. Census publications contain combined statistics. They are aggregated by geography, industry, or subject and thus cannot be used to identify persons or businesses. Individual census records are kept confidential for 72 years before being opened for historical use by the National Archives.

- A California charity employed census facts to determine areas of the state with households earning over $20,000 a year...and thus more likely to make a contribution.
- An East Coast department store chain considered opening a new store in an established shopping mall. Store planners used census facts to find the numbers and types of retail outlets in the area. From this information, they estimated business growth in the trade area and potential sales in the new store.
- A new company wanted sites for a chain of medical clinics in the Northwest. It used census information to narrow the selection to communities with high numbers of newly married couples with young children.
- In San Francisco, transportation planners used census information to select bus routes, subway stops, and highways that needed widening.

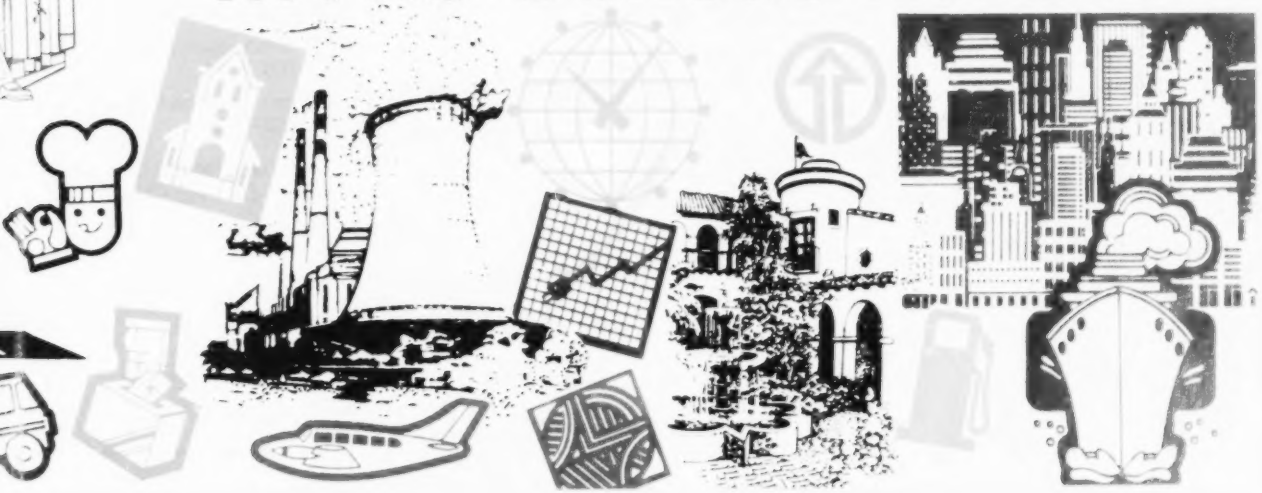
Where You Can Find Census Facts

You don't have to contact Washington, D.C., for census facts. The census report or map you need may be in your city or county planning office, neighborhood library, or local university. And you can get help finding census information from the Bureau's 12 regional offices (see back panel) or from a network of 52 State Data Centers and their 1,300 affiliates. Census information is also available from private companies that have repackaged it to meet special needs. These companies are listed with the Bureau's National Clearinghouse for Census Data Services. The Government Printing Office sells most census publications while the Bureau's Data User Services Division sells microfiche, summary computer tapes, and some reports.

AGE AND FAMILY TREE RESEARCH

If you can't find proof of your age, the Bureau will search its old census records and provide a certificate that only you can use to receive Social Security benefits, acquire a driver's license, or obtain a passport. And, if you research your family tree, the National Archives has microfilm of individual census records from 1790 through 1910.

...The Census Bureau!



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unt! or Contact

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